

**Standard 7-5** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the causes and effects of world conflicts in the early twentieth century.

**7-5.1** Explain the causes and key events of World War I, including: the rise of nationalism, ethnic and ideological conflicts in different regions, political and economic rivalries, the human costs of the mechanization of war, the Russian Revolution, and the entry of the United States into the War. (H, P, G, E)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In 5th grade, students summarize the United States' role and rise to world power prior to and throughout World War I (5-3.6).

In 8th grade, students will study the impact of WWI on South Carolina and also summarize the political, social, and economic changes on South Carolina following the war (8.6-2; 8.6-3).

In Global Studies students will summarize the causes of WWI, including political and economic rivalries, ethnic and ideological conflicts, and nationalism and propaganda. (GS-5.1). Students will also summarize the worldwide changes that took place following World War I, including the significance of the Russian Revolution and the rise of nationalist movement (GS-5.2).

In U.S. History students will outline the causes and course of WWI, focusing on the involvement of the United States, including the effects of nationalism, ethnic and ideological conflict (USHC-6.4).

**It is essential for students to know the causes and key events of World War I.** The M.A.I.N. causes of World War I were Militarism, secret Alliances, Imperialism and Nationalism. The driving force was nationalism. 'Nation' refers to a group of people who share a common language, religion, history and traditions. Not all nations had states; many were included in empires. Ethnic and ideological differences led to conflict within these empires. Nationalism also spurred economic and political rivalries among states led European nations to establish a complex system of military alliances. Russia, France and England formed an alliance and Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary formed a competing alliance. Newly united countries, such as Germany and Italy, along with established empires, were anxious to establish colonies to gain wealth through the acquisition of natural resources and trade. The igniting incident of the "Great War" was the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in Bosnia by a Serbian nationalist. The resulting confrontation between Austria-Hungary and Serbia quickly involved much of Europe in conflict due to the alliance system

The new technology of the Industrial Revolution saw the development of new weaponry, such as long range artillery, poison gases and gas masks, submarines, tanks, machine guns, airplanes, and flame throwers. These new technologies led to the widespread

degeneration into trench warfare as a battlefield strategy that lead to eventual stalemate and pronounced increases in the **human cost of war**.

Prior to WWI, Russians began to express discontent over economic, political, and social issues. Russians were discontented over issues like high taxes, working conditions, and political expression. The devastation from WWI exacerbated the discontent felt by the Russian populace. Czar (Tsar) Nicholas II was unable to manage Russia's ongoing difficulties and his authoritarianism weakened popular support for his power. As a result, in 1917 revolts of the working class led to the **Bolshevik (Russian) revolution**. Czar Nicholas II was overthrown and eventually he and his heirs were executed. The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, withdrew from the eastern front and abandoned their allies in 1918 and signed a separate peace treaty with Germany.

The United States declared neutrality at the outbreak of the Great War. However, various factors challenged American neutrality and eventually led to the **involvement of the United States** in the Great War. The traditional trading partnership with Great Britain and the blockade of German ports by the British navy severely limited American trade with Germany. American businesses made loans to the Allies in order to continue trade. Public opinion was impacted by America's traditional connection to the British. The German unrestricted use of the submarine affected public opinion against Germany and alienated President Wilson, who was incensed by the loss of innocent lives. The 1915 German U-boat's sinking of the British passenger ship, the *Lusitania*, brought about sharp protests from the President Wilson but did **not** bring the United States into the European war. Instead, Germany pledged to restrict their use of the submarine. Wilson campaigned for reelection in 1916 on the slogan that "he kept us out of war." The interception and publication by the British of Germany's Zimmerman note to Mexico negatively impacted American public opinion. In early 1917, revolution in Russia replaced the monarchy with a republic and President Wilson could now consider allying the United States with a 'democratic' Russia (that soon became communist). The decision of Germany to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in the spring of 1917 and Wilson's desire to broker a just peace prompted Wilson to ask the Congress to declare war on Germany in April of 1917. President Wilson announced his intention to "make the world safe for democracy" and later issued his Fourteen Points. The American Expeditionary Force affected the **course** of the war by deflecting the last push of the Germans on the western front in France and the armistice of November 11, 1918 ended the fighting between the Allies and the Central Powers.

**It is not essential for students to know** the specific dates and strategic details of fighting in World War I or the Russian Revolution. However, it may be helpful for students to understand the general idea that this was a two front war, the Eastern and Western Front, until the Russians dropped out of the war.

#### **Assessment guidelines:**

The objective of this indicator is to **summarize** the causes and key events of WWI. Therefore, the primary focus of assessment should be to **explain** the significance of militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism and **classify** examples of each. It is

important for students to ***interpret*** ethnic and ideological conflicts and ***infer*** the impact of technology on the human costs of the war. Appropriate assessments should also require students to ***compare*** the Russian Revolution to other revolutions of major *worldwide* impact. Students should also be able to ***interpret*** and ***summarize*** the series of events that led to the entry of the United States into the Great War.

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